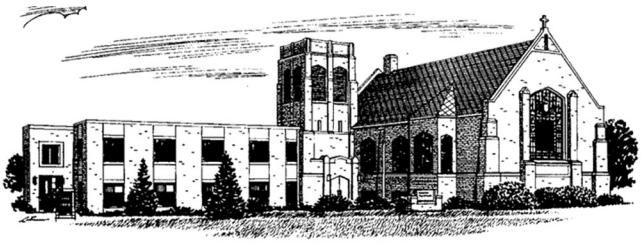
SARON MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Saron Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA)
510 Main Street
St. Joseph, Michigan 49085



Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
Phone: 269-983-1273
Facebook:www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

Saron's Mission: ***Joyfully sharing God's love for all!!!***

Joe Ulrey, Saron Congregational Council President
Cell: 313-718-2563
Email: josephulrey@yahoo.com

Amanda Bradley, Admin Assistant
Cell: 419-306-5780
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
bradley717@gmail.com

Marcus Roll, Music Director
Email: roll1mc@gmail.com

Irma Gorman, Organist

Ken Boyd, Bookkeeper
Email: financial@saronlutheran.org

Sara Porter, Childcare Specialist
Email: portersara20@gmail.com

Note: Schedule Change This Month!

Typical Sunday at Saron:

Summer (ends **Sept 1**):
10am Worship
On-Location and via Zoom
Nursery Available
No Learning Hour

Fall, Winter and Spring (begins **Sept 8**):
8:30am Worship On-Location
9:40am Learning Hour for Ages 3-Adult
11am Worship with Zoom Option
Nursery Available

We hold in prayer:
The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton,
Presiding Bishop, ELCA
The Rev. Dr. Craig Satterlee, Bishop of the
North/West Lower Michigan Synod, ELCA
The Episcopal Diocese of Western MI

Our Companion Synods:
Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras
Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea
Lutheran Church of Latvia

PASTOR JOAN'S LAST SERVICE & THANK YOU

Dear friends,

Words cannot express my appreciation and gratitude for the many expressions of love shown at my retirement celebration. First of all, we joined in worship giving thanks to God for all that has been and will be, with folks attending from near and far, members, family, and friends. The choirs (bell and vocal) were phenomenal as well as the quartet and all of the instrumental music. The words of gratitude for me were humbling. The gift of the painting will serve as a delightful memory of our time together. All of that before some fine food and fellowship. So many people put in so much effort and I value it all.

I am also profoundly aware that all those things are a reflection of who and whose you are - not just for a day, but for each and every day. While I will miss you terribly, I know you will continue to be the welcoming, faithful, generous folks you always are - joyfully sharing God's love for all!!! And for that I am most grateful.

In Christ's love,
Pastor Joan

General Information

OFFICE HOURS

Amanda Bradley (Admin Assistant):
Mondays & Thursdays 9am-noon
Helping Hands Office Volunteers:
Wednesdays 9:00am-11am (approx)
Ken Boyd (Bookkeeper):
Thursday Mornings and by Appointment

If you or your loved one is need of a visit or pastoral care, please contact Ed Staude. He will get you in touch with the correct person. Ed's contact info is 636/288-1016 or staude.edmund@gmail.com.

Other questions or concerns during the pastoral transition can be addressed to the appropriate council member or liaison:

President - Joe Ulrey
Vice President - Fran Bolson
Secretary - Claudia Staude
Treasurer - Ed Brunner
Worship - Erik Bergh (or Krin Jurgensen, Worship Chair)
Learning - Fran Bolson or Claudia Staude
Outreach - Sally Schmuhl or Jim Manore
Facilities - Steve Cook or Ed Brunner
Youth - Chuck Knebl
Support - Jim Manore (or Don Hafer, Support Chair)
Hospitality - Merrily Smith

Caring and Sharing

IN OUR PRAYERS

Tom Taylor is at Caretel in St. Joseph;
John Olson is at Woodland Terrace in Bridgman.

Happy Birthday Wishes to Saron's Members!

9/1 Romona Wallace
9/3 Chelsea Knauf
9/4 Nicole Coar
9/10 Julie Kimmerly
9/10 David Siewert
9/12 Charles Fortenbacher
9/12 Beth Gray-Roll
9/13 Sally Schmuhl
9/13 Makaio Talbert
9/15 Deanna Deaton
9/15 Dan Fortenbacher
9/16 William Oleson
9/17 Hannah Karl
9/17 John Olson
9/17 Hayes Hooper
9/18 Brandon Burrow
9/18 Troy Burrow
9/18 Grant Gacek
9/18 Wendy Hoffman
9/19 Rian Huff
9/20 Todd Gorman
9/21 Ester Kuyat
9/23 Kathy Cowall
9/24 Marybeth Culverhouse
9/24 Sue Fortenbacher
9/25 Colleen Lundgren
9/25 Kirsten Talbert
9/27 Jack Houser

Happy Anniversary Wishes to Saron's Members!

9/3 Kate & Scott Kohs
9/7 Karen & Peter Johnson
9/10 Pam & John Olson
9/11 Ken & Suzy Kohs
9/12 Shawn & Heidi de la Foret

"God's Blessings for a very happy day and year round!"

If there are any omissions from the birthday or anniversary list, or if a date is incorrect, please let us know so we can get it correct in the future!

Confirmation Class

Confirmation classes begin September 15 at 9:40am, between services. We have a couple students already but if you know of someone who might be interested, please contact Ed Staude at 636/288-1016 or staude.edmund@gmail.com. We generally begin at 6th grade but older students are welcome. Saron runs a three-year program: Old Testament, New Testament, and Catechism. This year's emphasis will be the catechism. New participants can jump in any year and work through the three-year cycle.

FORTIFY & fly

Lots of projects should be seeing progress in the near future. We will be removing one of the trees in the courtyard, close to the building, which will help with some of the issues with the roof drainage system. Painting in the sanctuary and narthex should start late September/early October. We're continuing to work on converting one of the current gender specific restrooms into a family restroom. Upgrades are also happening in the sacristy (the little room in the front of the sanctuary) to better utilize the space and allow for easier washing of the communion ware. Finally, improved external building signage is being investigated.

We will continue to provide updates until all projects are complete and all the money has been responsibly spent.

Worship

NEW: ASSISTED HEARING DEVICES

Our new sound system in the sanctuary came with headphones to assist those having difficulty hearing the worship service. If you are interested, ask Marcus if you can try one out.

SENSORY BAGS

As part of extending an unconditional welcome to all, we have Sensory Bags available for use. These bags contain a variety of fidgets that can help someone feel more able to sit quietly and/or focus. We also have noise canceling headphones for those who are sound sensitive. These brightly colored bags can be found in the narthex.

PRAYER GROUP

You are invited to offer your prayer petitions (concerns or thanksgivings) via our attendance cards each Sunday. Requests can also be made online via a link in our Thursday email. You may include as much, or little, detail as you wish. Requests are then given to the Monday prayer group. **You are invited to be part of this Monday group at 11am.** We follow a simple format of morning prayer and insert the petitions and prayers for Saron's ministry and the world. You don't even have to pray aloud, if you would prefer to pray quietly. Most weeks we are done in 30 minutes.

ALTAR FLOWERS

Sponsor a week by using the link in the weekly email or by contacting the church office. Please note any occasion/thanksgiving to be recognized in the bulletin. Flowers are $35 per vase. Checks are payable to Saron with "Flowers" as the memo. Take them home to enjoy then **simply return the vase to Saron.**

Nursery

Nursery service is available during worship. In order to utilize the space most effectively, this option is primarily directed towards our youngest members and guests. For preschoolers that need more physical and/or emotional space, activities are available in the narthex, including clipboards with coloring pages and children's bulletins. **It's vital to embrace family units in all stages and as such, we gladly welcome wiggles and giggles in worship!**

The goal of the nursery is to provide a safe environment to facilitate a meaningful worship experience for families. We recognize that may not look the same for all and encourage sharing concerns and suggestions.

We are always looking for additional helpers to share the load. Contact Marilyn Lucy (269/759-3464) with questions or interest.

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to read and reflect on the Scriptures for the day.

September 1: 15th Sunday after Pentecost
Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9
Psalm 15
James 1:17-27
Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

September 8: 16th Sunday after Pentecost
Isaiah 35:4-7
Psalm 146
James 2:1-10 [11-13] 14-17
Mark 7:24-37

September 15: 17th Sunday after Pentecost
Isaiah 50:4-9
Psalm 116:1-9
James 3:1-12
Mark 8:27-38

September 22: 18th Sunday after Pentecost
Jeremiah 11:18-20
Psalm 54
James 3:13-4:3, 7-8
Mark 9:30-37

September 29: 19th Sunday after Pentecost
Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29
Psalm 19:7-14
James 5:13-20
Mark 9:38-50

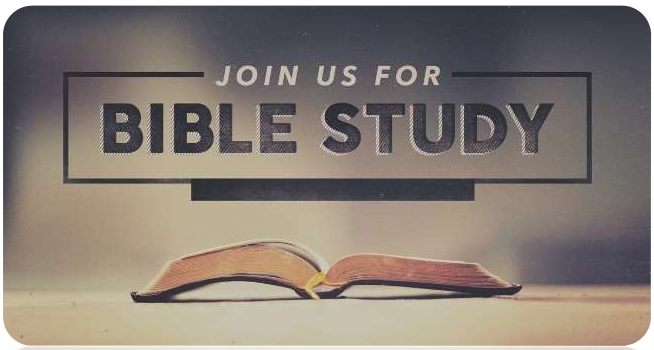
YOUTH GROUP

This group typically meets once per month after the late service for food, fun and fellowship. Friends are always welcome! **Contact Scott at scottgaspari@outlook.com with any questions or to be added to the email list.**

Learning

Saron is a congregation seeking to become more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture, in order that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered and sent by the Word.

We have many educational options to fit your needs and schedule. Always feel welcome to join us, at any time and for as many sessions as works for you.



SUNDAY LEARNING HOUR

Our program year will begin again on September 8. We have opportunities for many ages and stages!

The Sunday Learning Hour (9:40am-10:30am) offers the following options:

- Preschool - Grade 5: Sunday School
- Grades 6-8: Confirmation Classes
- High School - Adult: Adult Forum

TUESDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

The group is still deciding on a longer-term study for this fall, so for at least the first few weeks after Labor Day we will continue to read and discuss the lessons and Gospel reading for the following Sunday. We've had some great discussions this summer, and expect that will continue.

When available, information on a longer-term study will be provided in the weekly email and an announcement in church.

We meet Tuesday evenings at 6 pm in the upstairs lounge for one hour, then adjourn to a local restaurant for food and fellowship. Hope you can join us! **All are welcome!**

If you have any questions, feel free to call, text, or email:
Bob Kynast (269-921-2786, bobkynast@gmail.com)
Don Hafer (269-985-3637, hafer.don@gmail.com)

THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

The Thursday morning Bible study will begin their fall study on **September 12.** The book, entitled is $12. Let Colleen Lundgren know as soon as possible if you need a book or get it yourself on Amazon. New participants are always welcome. The class runs weekly from **9:30am-11am**.

From the website: *This six-week study explores what God has to say to us about grace and forgiveness through Joseph's story of trial and triumph found in Genesis 37-50. As we study his dreams, his betrayers, his dysfunctional family, his struggle to forgive, and his journey toward reconciliation, we'll find truths that echo into our own personal situations as well as practical help for answering common questions, such as:*

- *How do I stop dwelling on the hurt?*
- *Is forgiving someone excusing what happened?*
- *When will I stop having to re-forgive?*
- *Is there a difference between forgiveness and reconciliation?*
- *How can I forgive and still set boundaries?*
- *Is it ever okay not to forgive?*

Until then, we will continue to meet outside in the parking lot, with a focus on the lessons of the week. Bring a chair and a Bible. We'll move inside as weather dictates.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

To Infinity & Beyond:

God's Love Has No Boundaries

We had a fantastic four evenings at VBS last month with a dozen excited young people. We played, sang, crafted and learned about God's boundless love. Thank you to everyone that helped out, especially Fran, Kristen, Amanda, Claudia, Laura, Mary, Keith, Scott, Lindsay, Elizabeth, Mary, Jim, Matt, Mia, Alaina, Hunter, Sara, Dennis, Colleen, Dave and Kathie. Check our Facebook page for more pictures.

FORUM & fellowship

Forum & Fellowship is back for another season! Our goal is to build community as we learn about and discuss topics of interest. While not a traditional Bible study, we do look at issues through our faith-based lens. Our sessions are a combination of instruction, videos, pairing & sharing, group sharing, general discussion, and speakers. This year, I hope to have a variety of speakers. If you have not been a part of this evening, please consider attending. If you came last year, we are looking forward to your participation once again. **We meet at 7pm in the church lounge the first and third Wednesdays of each month with time off for Advent, Lent, and the summer months.**

A rough schedule of dates and topics follows. Join us for all of them or just the ones that pique your interest. Forum & Fellowship is open to all - adults, teens, married, single, members, families, guests… All are welcome! Some upper elementary and middle school folks might even find some of the topics interesting. Theme for this year - our website proclaims Saron is a church "Joyfully sharing God's love for all!" So, in fine Lutheran tradition, we ask, *what does this mean?* This year, we will seek to learn who some of the *all* are and how we can better connect with them.

September 18: Poverty in Berrien County
October 2: LGBTQ+ Neighbors
October 16: Indigenous people of Michigan
October 30: Special Needs Residents
November 6: Special Needs Residents
November 20: Connecting with Others During Holidays
January 8: Is MLK Still Relevant?
January 22: People of Indian Heritage (subcontinent)
February 5: People of Hispanic Origin
February 19: Families of One - Singles
April 23: Neighbors with 'Shrinking Worlds'
May 7: Neighbors Who Have Lost Family and Friends
May 21: Neighbors Struggling with Mental Health

Contact Ed Staude at 636/288-1016 with any questions.

BOOK CLUB

Sunday, September 1 at 6:30pm will find us in the lounge ready to discuss *All the Broken Places* by John Boyne. Immersive and chilling, the story moves back and forth between 91-year-old Gretel Fernsby's comfortable life in London to her girlhood in Germany. Now faced with a chance to save a young boy from evil, she will be forced to reveal secrets she's spent a lifetime protecting. Come join us for good conversations and fellowship. The book for October is *Horse* by Geraldine Brooks. All are welcome at any of our meetings.

Please contact Kathy Cowall at 269/428-0354 or kcowall@hotmail.com to be added to the email list for updates or more information.

When I've had too much reality, I open a book.
Claudia Wiggins Earhart

Women of the ELCA

DEBORAH CIRCLE

We will meet on **Wednesday, September 11 at 7pm** in the church lounge. Zoom will be available. A link for that will be emailed close to the meeting date. The study will be from the May/June issue of Gather magazine titled *After certainty*, session one: *Curiosity*, p. 36-41. A leader is needed for this study. Anyone interested in leading, please contact Melanie at 269/449-8399. If no one volunteers, then we will have a study in a "round robin" style.

Hospitality

SUNDAY SNACKS

Who doesn't love a snack during a time of fellowship in the narthex? If you would like to be a Sunday snack host, sign up via the link in our weekly email or call/email the office so Amanda can sign you up. Please plan for at least 30 to partake. Thank you!

Outreach

THE BENTON HARBOR SOUP KITCHEN™ HEART-TO-HEART™

Simple food, honestly sourced and lovingly made creates connections, gives fuel to the fight, and starves ignorance and apathy.
- Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen

On July 25, Saron members Jim Manore, Cindy Brown, Mary Zylema, Dave & Kathie Bradley and Bob Deaton were busy at the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen preparing and serving lunch to 110 guests. Those partaking enjoyed a ham dinner, including rice, coleslaw, fruit, pickles, bread & homemade cookies. Thanks to our cookie bakers Mary Alice Brunner, Merrily Smith, Marilyn Frey, & Karen Johnson.

If you are able to help with the preparation and serving, or by providing cookies, use the link in the weekly email or contact Kathie Bradley at 269-921-4665.

Thank you to all who continue to support this ministry with your time, contributions, and prayers.
Joyfully sharing God's love for all!

NOISY OFFERING

ELCA WORLD HUNGER

We receive a noisy offering
(or those not-so-noisy bills)
on the first Sunday of each month.
These gifts are sent to
ELCA World Hunger.

Thank you for your continued support!

EYE GLASS COLLECTION

Lions RECYCLE For Sight

Do you have old glasses sitting in a drawer? Lions Club has provided a collection box in the narthex. We have several members who are Lions that can deliver our glasses to the club where they will do more good. Thank you!

INCLUSIVITY TASK FORCE

The Inclusivity Task Force is committed to extending a welcome to all. Our congregation adopted the following welcome statement and is a **Reconciling in Christ** church.

As a community of faith who *joyfully shares God's love for all*, we believe our lives and faith are strengthened by diversity. We strive to be a community who welcomes people of every ability, age, citizenship status, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, language, marital status, political perspective, race, and sexual orientation. We are committed to the work of racial equity. Whatever life's circumstance, we openly welcome and value you. We celebrate God's unconditional love and respond joyfully to your presence here. All are welcome. You are welcome.

If you ever have any questions or need clarification on our inclusivity journey, please feel free to call any one of the task force members:

Laurel Gacek: 269/470-6062 or mlmg2445@sbcglobal.net
Lindsay Gaspari: 847/373-8826 or lindsay.gaspari@yahoo.com

Interfaith Action

Interfaith Action (swmichiganinterfaith.org) is a coalition of over 40 faith communities in Allegan, Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph, and Van Buren Counties. Some members of Saron attend meetings and work with various task force groups. One of the goals of Interfaith Action is to promote understanding and respect for diversity.

The first step in getting involved, is getting informed. Register to receive their communications at https://swmichinterfaith.org/contact1

Support

The Support Committee typically meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 8pm via Zoom. Contact Don Hafer with any questions at 269/985-3637.

STOCK DONATIONS

Saron partners with TD Ameritrade, a brokerage firm, to accept stock donations. If you would like to donate stock, email Ed Brunner at ebrunner54@gmail.com to receive more information. Thanks!

Facilities

HELPING HANDS (Previously Golden Hammers)

We do all sorts of things from building maintenance to preps for worship in the sanctuary to assembling bulletins and newsletters and so much more. We meet on Wednesdays around 9am and know you are invited – whatever your age, gender, or ability. There is a job for you to use your helping hands.

Other Bits of News

As we transition to a new pastor, it is vital to have volunteer spots filled and filled EARLY to avoid the stress of last-minute assignments. Please use the links in the weekly email to fill a reader, usher, or building closer spot for NEXT week, or ideally NEXT month, rather than waiting until right before to see if we have a need for Sunday. This would be a huge help. Thank you!!!

SCHOOL SUPPLIES DRIVE

It's not too late! You can bring school supplies for Lybrook Elementary School in Eau Claire *until God's work. Our Hands.* Sunday on September 8!

Suggested items: pencils, crayons, markers, glue sticks, notebooks, folders, tissues, disinfecting wipes, white board markers, and gift cards to Meijer and Walmart.

This outreach effort impacts so many teachers and students! Thank you for being part of the solution.

In 2025, Saron will celebrate our 150th anniversary! This will be a big deal and a huge undertaking, with events throughout that whole year. The committee has been working on preliminary planning and has established an important date for your calendar.

- August 10, 2025 -

We will have a celebratory worship with Bishop Craig Satterlee at 10am, followed by a dinner at Union & Social, a beautiful venue in St. Joseph. More details to come in the future but keep this date open during your travel planning for next year!

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

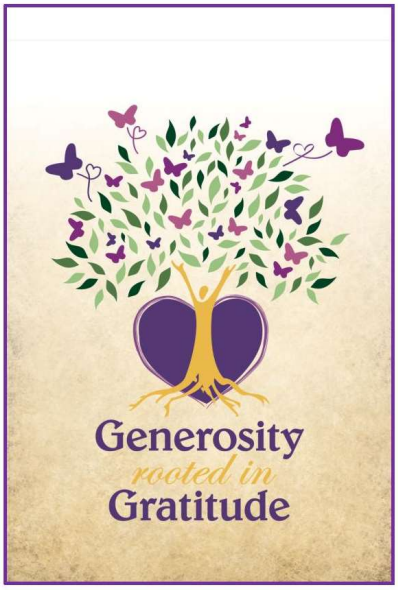
As you are aware, Pastor Joan has retired from Saron. Thank you to everyone that pitched in to make her last Sunday meaningful for her and the whole family. To begin our next steps, Council has selected a team of 5 diverse members to create our Ministry Site Profile (MSP), a document that covers all facets of our church. Once complete, that profile will be used by the ELCA to provide us with potential good matches that the Call Committee (not yet formed) can choose to interview.

The MSP team believed it was important to solicit opinions from as many members as possible to help them answer the questions in the profile. A survey went out at the end of August. I hope everyone took advantage of the opportunity to have a say in how we describe who we are and what we need to continue to thrive.

Bishop Satterlee and his assistant, Chrisy Bright, have both expressed our congregation has a lot of positives that will help attract candidates. We still have to put in the work and it will take time. We've had a good run of guest pastors and have a long-term supply pastor, Vicky Blough, ready to serve on a fairly regular basis in the coming months. We're in good shape!

Contact me or one of the other council members with any questions or concerns.

Till next Month, Joe Ulrey, 2024 Saron Council President



Fall 2024 Stewardship Season Is Coming!

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. (Colossians 2:6-7)

During the last two Stewardship Seasons, we highlighted the need to strengthen our connection with God, with the objective of helping us become better stewards of all that God has given us. The subtheme of those two seasons – *It's all about gratitude; It's all about giving back; It's all about God.* – captures the essence of stewardship and is a concept that we should continue to embrace.

Last fall we emphasized gratitude. This year we are taking that a step further by focusing on *Generosity rooted in Gratitude*. Gratitude is appreciating life's gifts while generosity is sharing those gifts. And generosity, the "willingness to give help or support, especially more than is usual or expected," is the mindset that we hope to bolster at Saron, not just for this upcoming fall season, but throughout the years ahead.

Through worship and reflection during the coming Stewardship Season, you will have opportunities to explore how generosity can take root and grow. Key happenings planned for this season include:

Weekly email devotions (starting Sept 29)

Showing Generosity through Worship & Music ---------- Sunday, Sept 29

Showing Generosity through Prayer & Meditation ---------- Sunday, Oct 6
Prayer Labyrinth (Dining Hall, Oct 6-27)

Showing Generosity through Service & Learning ---------- Sunday, Oct 13

Showing Generosity through Care of God's Creation ---------- Sunday, Oct 20

Showing Generosity through Church Life at Saron ---------- Sunday, Oct 27

Showing Generosity through Commitment ---------- Sunday, Nov 3
Celebration Sunday and Offering of Commitments
Swedish fare and fellowship following each service!

We hope you again embrace and enjoy this Stewardship Season. Let's have some fun! Look for more details in the weekly emails and bulletins, monthly newsletters, and U.S. mail.

Stewardship is what we do after we say we believe.

Call for Stewardship Devotions

Written devotions provided by Saron members and friends have been instrumental in recent Stewardship Seasons. So, we are again asking for volunteers to write a short, inspirational message or submit a photo/drawing (or provide both message and photo/drawing) that reflects on a selected Bible passage of the week (to be provided when you express interest).

If you are interested in participating this year, please contact Carol Hafer (269-470-2255) or Kathy Bergh (906-290-3346) as soon as possible. Devotions should be submitted to Kathy by email (kathy.bergh960@gmail.com) no later than September 11, 2024. Thanks for your participation!

SARON LUTHERAN CHURCH
510 MAIN STREET
ST. JOSEPH, MI 49085

Website:
Email:info@saronlutheran.org

A Congregation of:
The North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

SEPTEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Join us for

"God's work. Our hands."

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

Sunday, September 8 | 1pm – 3pm

This is the day congregations from across the ELCA go out into our communities and make a difference. Saron is offering two options for service projects: Readiness Center & The Boys & Girls Club. Lunch will be served after the 2nd service for those volunteering. Sign up in the narthex or via the link in the Thursday email.

SEPTEMBER 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10am Worship with Zoom Option NO Learning Hour **Last Summer Sunday!**	**2** **LABOR DAY**	**3** 6pm Bible Study	**4** 9am Helping Hands	**5** 9:30am Bible Study 6pm Bells Rehearsal 7pm Choir Rehearsal	**6**	**7**
8 8:30am Worship 9:40am Learning Hour 11am Worship with Zoom Option ***God's Work. Our Hands.***	**9** 11am Prayer Group	**10** 6pm Bible Study 8pm Support Meeting	**11** 9am Helping Hands 7pm Deborah Circle	**12** 9:30am Bible Study 6pm Bells Rehearsal 7pm Choir Rehearsal	**13**	**14**
15 8:30am Worship 9:40am Learning Hour 11am Worship with Zoom Option	**16** 11am Prayer Group 7pm Council Meeting	**17** 6pm Bible Study	**18** 9am Helping Hands 7pm Forum & Fellowship	**19** 9:30am Bible Study 6pm Bells Rehearsal 7pm Choir Rehearsal **NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE**	**20**	**21**
22 8:30am Worship 9:40am Learning Hour 11am Worship with Zoom Option	**23** 11am Prayer Group	**24** 6pm Bible Study	**25** 9am Helping Hands	**26** 9:30am Bible Study 6pm Bells Rehearsal 7pm Choir Rehearsal **SOUP KITCHEN DAY**	**27**	**28**
29 8:30am Worship 9:40am Learning Hour 11am Worship with Zoom Option	**30** 11am Prayer Group					